



**MINUTES OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE (57)  
OF THE CORPORATION OF BLACKPOOL SIXTH FORM COLLEGE**

**Date: Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2010**  
**Venue: Sixth Form College**  
**Room: Committee Room**  
**Time: 1700hrs - 1900hrs**

**Present:** Mrs C Tyler (Chair)  
Cllr. D Clapham  
Mr G Curry  
Mr A Goodinson  
Ms F Greeves  
Miss S Lightowlers  
Dr A Mohan  
Mr R Weaver

Ms K Kirkwood (Deputy Principal)  
Mrs JA Trainor (Assistant Clerk to the Corporation)  
Dr J Burgess (Clerk to the Corporation)

		<b>Action</b>
<b>1.2010</b>	<b>Apologies for Absence</b> Mr J Boyle, Dr D Sanders and Ms K Talboys	
<b>2.2010</b>	<b>Declaration of Interest</b> Cl Clapham recorded his responsibilities with Blackpool Council with regard to discussions on the College's 5 year Strategic Plan, Machinery of Government changes and the Collegiate High School's Improvement Plan.	
<b>3.2010</b>	<b>Consideration of any items of urgent business</b> The Principal was pleased to announce that the College had been placed 59 <sup>th</sup> in the Sunday Times 2010 "75 Best Places to Work in the Public Sector". Over 200 organizations had entered, and this was considered an excellent result in their first year participating in the award. The rankings assess the extent of employee engagement and satisfaction via a confidential staff survey.  In addition, the Principal had visited No 10 Downing Street yesterday and met the Prime Minister and other Ministers as part of a visit of Ofsted designated high performing Colleges. It was hoped that valuable press coverage could result from these events. Governors offered their congratulations.	
<b>4.2010</b>	<b>Presentation – Learning Resources Centre</b> Joanne Mackie, Head of the College's Learning Resources Centre gave an interesting presentation covering the past achievements and future ambitions for her area of responsibility.	

She highlighted the work done in creating supportive and effective learning areas, within both the main library and FY1 Express locations, through customized staff development sessions for her team, continued focus on the College's core values and the publication of an "Expectations Charter" for the Learning Resource Centre. Through regular monitoring of the study areas, enhanced collaboration with Teaching Departments and targeted support to specific students, particularly those with low MTGs, they provided a vital support service to assist all students.

With the increased numbers of computers, study spaces and staff, the service was well poised to launch study skills workshops and associated E resources training for students and staff as well as introduce best practice idea from other colleges.

In response to Governors' questions, it was confirmed that during the main core hours in the day, access to a number of the social networking sites and You Tube was blocked. Despite this restriction, recent user surveys indicated that students were generally happy and the computer resources were currently sufficient. The Chair thanked Ms Mackie for a comprehensive and useful insight into one of the College's most important support services.

**5.2010 Minutes of the meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2009.**

*(Paper A)*

**5.2010 D1 Resolved:** that the Minutes be approved.

**6.2010 Matters arising from the Minutes of the Meeting held on the 1<sup>st</sup> December 2009**

*38.2009 Holidays in Term Time*

The Principal confirmed that there were fewer instances of students taking holidays in term time at the moment, but the problem had not gone away. Management and teaching colleagues were vigilant on this matter and determined to maintain a clear stand for the benefit of individual students, their peers and the College as a whole.

Governors echoed their full support of the policy and the actions of managers to enforce the policy.

**7.2010 Early Leavers Report and Retention Statistics 2010**

*(Paper B and C)*

The Principal explained that the Early Leavers Report had been produced in January 2010, whilst the Comparative Student Numbers and % Retention Paper was finalized in late February 2010. Both documents indicated that there were a larger number of students leaving College early, but this was not a major worry in view of the increased numbers of students joining the College, the continually improving advice and guidance service and the action plans in place within Departments to identify students at risk of leaving.

Governors wondered if there were also systems in operation to share best practice in student retention. The Principal confirmed that this form of positive sharing is taking place.

**7.2010 D1 Resolved: that the Early Leavers Report 2010 and Student Numbers and Retention % Report be received.**

**8.2010 Student Achievement – January Results 2010**

The Principal stated that the review of the Strategic Development Plan 2009 / 2010 was not yet complete and would be available for the next meeting. However, as an update on the key performance indicator of Student Achievement, she tabled the Module results from the last examination round. She reviewed and explained the reasons for the apparent low performance in Critical Thinking, PE, Geography, Business studies and Biology. The particular issues associated with the IT Examination (not featured in the Report) were explored and it was noted that students would be offered a free re-sit, due to the problems with the Examination Board in this subject area. A Consultant was attending College tomorrow to support all Departments to identify improvement opportunities.

**8.2010 D1 Resolved: that the Student Achievement – January Results 2010 be received.**

**9.2010 Five year Strategic Development Plan 2009 - 2015**

The Principal provided Governors with a draft framework for planning strategic developments over the next five years. Given the forthcoming launch of the new branding, the emergence of a new sixth form sector, the new relationship with Blackpool Council and the College's 21<sup>st</sup> birthday celebrations, it was timely to consider how the organization should move forward.

The claim of a "step change" was explored, as was the nature of the collaboration with the local Council. It was agreed that corporate independence from the funding agencies was likely to be maintained, however, it was very appropriate for the College to enter a strong strategic relationship with Blackpool Council. Similarly a range of other key stakeholders had been identified, with whom it was increasingly important to develop good relationships. Governors supported the broad strategic aims, particularly the focus on strong QA processes. With this in mind, the drive for external recognition and benchmarking with the best in class was an excellent improvement strategy. Governors wondered about the provision of the new Diplomas, and the Principal counselled that a watching brief be maintained due to the expense of offering these courses at the present time.

**9.2010 D1 Resolved: that the draft Five year Strategic Development Plan 2009 - 2015 be received.**

**9.2010 D2 Resolved: that the draft Five year Strategic Development Plan 2009 - 2015 be forwarded to the next meeting of the Corporation for further comment.**

Clerk  
To action

*Ms Lightowlers left the meeting*

**10.2010 Stakeholder feedback – Mid year Review of Complaints 2009 / 2010**  
*(Paper E)*

The Deputy Principal reported on the 17 complaints received this year, in comparison to the 27 for the same period in 2008/09. All had been resolved, without the need for further additional action, although 2 had exceeded the response times. Governors sought further points of clarity on a number of the cases to judge the level of seriousness and appropriateness of the response. Governors requested that the management endeavour to capture and summarise the number of compliments received.

Deputy  
Principal  
To action

**10.2010 D1 Resolved:** that the **Stakeholder feedback – Mid year Review of Complaints 2009 /10 be received.**

**11.2010 Stakeholder feedback – Student Survey 2009 - 2010**  
*(Paper F)*

The Report featured a large number of positive improvements in the levels of satisfaction reported by students in comparison to last year. The Principal had met with student groups to discuss the survey and outline the College's action plan. This would be featured in posters in due course. The technical problems about timing / inputting the questionnaire were noted and Governors were satisfied with the actions proposed.

**11.2010 D1 Resolved:** that the **Stakeholder feedback – Student Survey 2009 – 2010 be received**

**12.2010 Investors in People Gold Award**  
*(Paper G)*

Governors were delighted to read the detailed Report from the Assessors on the College's successful application to secure the Gold Award. The College had met an additional 155 evidence requirements above the 39 required for the Investors in People Standard. Clearly it had surpassed the minimum of the 165 threshold for the gold award. As one of the first recipients of this coveted award, indeed probably the first Sixth Form College in the country, a number of organizations had requested help and guidance. Governors warmly congratulated all staff that had contributed to securing this significant Award.

**12.2010 D1 Resolved:** that the **Investors in People Gold Award Report December 2009 be received**

**13.2010 Internal Departmental Inspection – Business and IT**  
*(Paper H)*

The Principal advised that this was the first internal inspection since the OFSTED visit last year. It had involved 18 lesson observations in addition to reviews of documentation and student work, as well as meetings with students and staff. Overall it was a positive, though mixed report, with some excellent examples of good practice, which now needed to be shared across the Department. The team was commended for its support to students and commitment to widening participation and Governors were content to confirm the Grade 2 (Good) award.

**13.2010 D1 Resolved:** that the **Internal Departmental Inspection – Business and IT March 2010 is received.**

**14.2010 Internal Departmental Inspection – Business Support SAR Grades**

*(Paper I)*

The Principal observed that she had been involved directly with the validation of the self-assessments of the business support areas and had been impressed with the rigour adopted by colleagues. Although not part of the SAR submission to the LSC, the process was identical and highlighted some outstanding sections. A recent merger had taken place between Examinations and MIS to enhance the move to e business processes. Governors offered their thanks and congratulations to the Business Support Departments.

**14.2010 D1 Resolved:** that the **Internal Departmental Inspection – Business Support SAR Grades be received.**

**15.2010 National Challenge Trust**

*(Paper J)*

The Principal introduced the opening sections of the Collegiate High School's Improvement Plan 2009 – 2014 for the National Challenge Trust. The College is now providing support, guidance and consultancy to the new management team, headed by the interim Head Ms Fiona Cordeaux, and hoping to replicate the turnaround that had occurred at the Sixth Form. Significant budgets, up to £700k over two years, could be available for the project.

Governors reviewed the mission statement, vision, strategic intent and the priorities and milestones 2009 – 2014. It was agreed that given the complexity of the problems at the School it would not be a quick fix. However, they acknowledged the progress made and echoed their full support to the initiative.

**15.2010 D1 Resolved:** that the opening sections of the **Collegiate High School's Improvement Plan 2009 – 2014** for the National Challenge Trust **be received**

**16.2010 Estimation of Risk**

The meeting reflected on the items discussed and observed that no new risk areas had emerged during the meeting.

**17.2010 Date of next meeting**

The next meeting of the Committee was confirmed as **Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> June 2010 @1700hrs.**

The Committee offered their sincere thanks to the Chair for all her work in connection with this committee and wished her a long and happy retirement. The Chair thanked members for their kind words, attendance and contributions and closed the meeting.

Members  
Note start time

Signed:.....

Name:.....

Date:.....